

of struggle that a writer can even begin to make a living.

As I said before, music is intellectual property—and the owners should be paid for the use of their product—particularly when other businesses are making money by using their work.

Finally, I agree with Rep. Mary Bono in hopes that the House will revisit this issue and its detrimental effect on American songwriters and our international trade agreements in the next session. Enacting Title II of this bill is a grave mistake.

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH AND VETERANS HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bill, H.R. 4567, although I do so with some reservations. The Committee on Veterans' Affairs has a long tradition of bipartisanship in developing constructive policy to meet the needs of veterans. Under the leadership of Chairman BOB STUMP, our Committee considered, perfected and approved, H.R. 1362, the Veterans Medicare Reimbursement Act of 1997. I continue to believe H.R. 1362 better addresses the needs of veterans and VA while simultaneously providing Medicare savings. These Medicare savings would result from authorizing VA to charge the Health Care Financing Administration for certain care provided by VA to certain Medicare-eligible veterans using a discounted Medicare fee schedule or capitated payment rate. H.R. 1362 was approved by the Veterans' Affairs Committee with the support of the Administration and all of the major veterans' services organizations. Working with the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the Senate Finance Committee included a provision similar to H.R. 1362 in its version of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Unfortunately, this provision was not included in the conference agreement. I hope that future negotiations with the Senate will yield a measure more like H.R. 1362—a more thoughtful and cautious approach than the measure we are considering today.

My support for the measure before us today is due to VA's desperate need for funding from non-appropriated sources on which the Administration is depending. Since it received authority to retain medical care cost recovery funds, VA collections have actually declined. VA intended to use both Medicare reimbursement and medical care cost recovery funds to provide 10-percent of its funding from non-appropriated sources. VA's inability to collect the levels of funds it anticipated from these sources has resulted in a serious unanticipated budget shortfall.

Now VA faces a new challenge—the Under Secretary for Health has committed to “take all comers” into its health care system and provide them with specified health care benefits. Since VA has already committed to enrolling both veterans who bring payment for services to the door with them and veterans without such funding, VA will have no additional incentive to treat those in higher-income

groups. I am uncertain what the consequences of Dr. Kizer's decision to enroll all veterans will be for VA, but I know that additional resources will better ensure its ability to honor this commitment without limiting access to care to other veterans with a higher priority to care.

I commend the gentleman from California, Mr. Thomas, for his work on behalf of VA-Medicare Subvention. However, I believe we need to re-assess VA's health care funding sources and end the funding “shell game” which has subjected VA to an uncertain revenue stream for the last three years. It hasn't worked. If VA is to be a high-quality health care system, Congress must be committed to funding the VA with adequate appropriated resources for the next fiscal year and years to come.

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH AND VETERANS HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, although I am an original cosponsor of the original version of H.R. 4567, the Medicare Home Health Care Interim Payment System Refinement Act, I am rising in reluctant support for the bill.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 implemented a poorly designed formula for Medicare payments to home health agencies which devastated home health agencies around the country. Reimbursements were slashed across the board and more than a thousand home health agencies either closed or began refusing to accept Medicare beneficiaries. The number of Medicare-Certified Home Health Agencies in my home state of Hawaii went from 28 in October 1997, to 22 in August 1998. A 22 percent decline in ten months.

For every agency that is closed, there are several hundred patients who are abandoned. The situation compels immediate action and I am very pleased the House is addressing this problem. Nonetheless I believe more can be done.

I am distressed that this bill is not retroactive. Many agencies have continued to operate in the red for the past year clinging to the hope that Congress would enact retroactive legislation to fix the payment problem. Agencies will not get assistance for losses they took this year and because of this, many will close even with the additional payments provided by this bill.

Furthermore this bill does not address the additional problems that would be created by the impending home health payment reduction scheduled for September 1999. Unless we address this problem we will be in the same situation next September, as we are in now.

Since H.R. 4567's introduction, numerous unrelated provisions have been added to the bill. One of my main objections to this bill is the inclusion of language expanding the Roth IRA limit from \$100,000 to \$145,000. This is a tax shelter for the wealthy and will cost U.S. taxpayers almost \$5 billion over 10 years while providing little, if any, benefit to the majority of the population.

I am pleased that the bill will enable Medicare to reimburse the VA for services provided to Medicare eligible Veterans by VA facilities. This change is fiscally responsible and is predicted to save the Federal Government money in the long run. However, I am concerned that services previously paid for by the VA would now be extracting scarce resources from the Medicare Trust Fund.

In conclusion, although the meager home health payment increase is not at the level I would have liked, this is a step in the right direction and I am relieved that struggling home health agencies will receive some assistance.

TURKMENISTAN: AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE POLITICAL STABILITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 10, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a sense of the Congress resolution supporting United States assistance to the Republic of Turkmenistan to build pipeline routes or take other measures necessary to resume the export of natural gas.

Turkmenistan, a newly independent Republic, bordering the oil and gas rich Caspian Sea, plays a vital role in the stability of Central Asia, a region that is quickly becoming one of the most strategically important areas in the world.

As we enter the 21st century, it should be the goal of the United States to support the exploration and use of cleaner sources of energy, without hampering economic growth. Turkmenistan, a country with one of the largest reserves of natural gas in the world, plays a key role in reaching this goal.

At this point, political and economic factors have hindered Turkmenistan from exporting its natural gas to the world. The United States must act to assist Turkmenistan in resuming the sale of its natural gas. The resumption of Turkmen gas sales is one of the main hurdles that must be overcome before economic and political stability comes to this region.

Without stability, Central Asia could cease to be a viable source of clean energy for the world, and also deteriorate into a “hot spot” where different cultures and political forces could combine to create a threat to our national security.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow members to support this resolution, and in so doing give Turkmenistan encouragement to promote stability and democratization in the region.

TRIBUTE TO DR. IVOR L. GEFT

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 10, 1998

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Ivor L. Geft, one of the most dynamic and dedicated physicians in Los Angeles. Dr. Geft is the recipient of The Jewish Healthcare Foundation—Avraham Moshe Bikur Cholim's Ahavas Chesed Award. He is being recognized for his excellence in caring

for the health and welfare of all citizens of Los Angeles, regardless of age, sex, creed, or color.

The Talmud states, "He who does Charity and Justice is as if he had filled the whole world with kindness." In the spirit of these words, Dr. Geft continuously performs acts of charity and justice that brings an incredible sense of loving kindness and hope to the greater community of Los Angeles. His dedication to increasing the well being of the ailing is unique. Known for visiting patients young and old alike, he can be spotted in a variety of hospitals and homes throughout Los Angeles around the clock. Amidst the busy schedule of a cardiologist, Dr. Geft does not hesitate to make time for any of his patients. His commitment to helping others has significantly improved the quality of life in our community.

Dr. Geft's compassion is coupled with his reputation as one of the most well respected cardiologists in the city of Los Angeles. Dr. Geft serves as a physician specializing in cardiology, primarily at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He also travels throughout the city and has privileges to UCLA Hospital, Midway Hospital, and Century City Hospital. He is an associate clinical professor at the UCLA School of Medicine. However, his well earned reputation began prior to his practice in Los Angeles. Dr. Geft was senior cardiologist at Shaare Zedek Hospital and worked as a fellow in cardiology at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, Israel. He attended school at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Dr. Geft's list of accomplishments is tireless. He is a member of the world renowned Royal College of Physicians in the United Kingdom. He is also a member of the Israel Board of Cardiologists. He belongs to the California Medical Association, is a fellow at the American College of Cardiology, and is a member of the Israel Medicine Society. His leadership abilities have been recognized by many, including the American Heart Association, who awarded him the Young Investigators Award. Today, his talents are being recognized once again.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Dr. Geft for his love, dedication, and passionate service to his patients and the community of Los Angeles.

HONORING HENRY B. GONZALEZ
FOR 4½ DECADES OF SERVICE
TO THE HOUSE AND THE PEOPLE
OF THE 20TH CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT OF TEXAS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand here and extol the achievements of Congressman GONZALEZ. His legacy is as extensive as it is grand, and I find myself awed by his accomplishments.

Congressman GONZALEZ has served in Congress for 38 years. From the moment that he entered the Congressional service on November 4, 1961, Congressman GONZALEZ has represented his constituents, his State, and his Nation with the utmost loyalty and dignity.

As the Representative of the San Antonio area, Congressman GONZALEZ has served on

the House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs and on its housing subcommittees. As the Chairman of the Banking Committee from 1989 to 1994, the Congressman conducted over 500 hearings that covered topics ranging from the Bush Administration's pre-war policy toward Iraq to the Bank of Commerce and Credit International scandal.

While acting as Chairman of the Banking Committee, Congressman GONZALEZ also guided 71 bills through the legislative process. Among these important measures were bills that provided important services such as making more credit available to small businesses and strengthening laws pertaining to financial crimes. As a member and a Chair, Congressman GONZALEZ assisted in the restoration of the savings and loans industry and helped to overhaul the deposit insurance system.

Beyond his work with the Banking Committee, Congressman GONZALEZ has actively promoted legislation that dealt with areas such as civil rights, education, veterans, and equal opportunity.

As the Chairman of the Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance, the Congressman sponsored the "Gonzalez Amendment" that protects U.S. citizens' overseas property from expropriation without just compensation from a foreign government.

As the Chairman of the ad hoc Subcommittee on the Robinson-Patman Act, Anti-trust Legislation, and Related Matters, Congressman GONZALEZ preserved the interests of small businesses. Moreover, the report he issued as the Chair is now revered by anti-trust lawyers.

Most significantly, the Congressman helped his constituents by authoring a series of public laws over a six year period that paved the way to San Antonio's hosting of the 1968 World's Fair. That event generated business for the Congressman's district and resulted in a convention center, an exhibit hall, additional hotels, a new theater and restaurant district, and additional shops.

We will miss Congressman GONZALEZ's dedication and service as a Member of Congress. I know that my home State of Texas will miss the service of one of our great Americans on its behalf in the U.S. Congress. On behalf of Texas, I would like to thank Congressman GONZALEZ for his accomplishments. I wish him the best as he embarks on his well-earned retirement.

HONORING ROBERT C. JAZWINSKI,
SHENANGO VALLEY CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE 1998 PERSON OF
THE YEAR AWARD

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 10, 1998

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor Robert C. Jazwinski who was awarded the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce 1998 Person of the Year Award.

This award is presented annually by the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce in order to honor a person who exemplifies leadership, commitment, and devotion to the Shenango Valley area. Robert Jazwinski's efforts in supporting and promoting the Shenango Valley have been exemplary.

The Shenango Valley is grateful that Mr. Jazwinski has decided to make it his home along with his wife Sally and three daughters Alison, Sarah and Jenny. He is the president and chief executive officer of Jazwinski Financial Services. Robert has established himself as a Certified Public Accountant, Certified Financial Planner and Specialist and has been recognized by the Personal Financial Planning Division of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants with high distinction.

Mr. Jazwinski has been committed to the Shenango Valley because he cares about bringing its citizens together. He has served on the board of directors of the chamber of commerce and as a commissioner for the city of Hermitage. Currently, he is an F.H. Buhl Trustee, executive vice president of the Shenango Valley Foundation, and a member of the board of directors for the executive committee and treasurer of the Penn Northwest Development Corporation.

It is an honor to recognize Mr. Jazwinski and his achievements. He is a man who has made an important difference in the Shenango Valley.

NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support for S. 459, a measure to reauthorize the Native American Programs Act of 1974. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Native American Programs Act to extend the authorization to fiscal year 2000 of appropriations for programs administered by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) with the Department of Health and Human Services. This legislation would also reauthorize, for a period of 1 year, the Native Hawaiian revolving loan fund.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is critical to continue the availability of a modest amount of grant funds used by native communities nationwide to foster economic growth, develop tools for good governance and promote social welfare.

In 1974, the Native American Programs Act was enacted by Congress to assist tribes and other Native American communities with developing social, economic, and governance strategies in order to become economically self-sufficient. Since its enactment, hundreds of tribes, reservation communities, and other native organizations have benefited from the programs funded under this Act, programs which foster the development of stable, diversified local economies by developing the physical, commercial, industrial and/or agricultural components necessary for a functioning economic base.

ANA has provided grants for governance, social, and economic development projects; grants to assist with tribal recognition efforts; grants for projects to assist tribes in their capacity to meet environmental requirements; grants to support projects which promote the survival and preservation of Native American languages and funds to support the Native Hawaiian revolving loan fund. These projects